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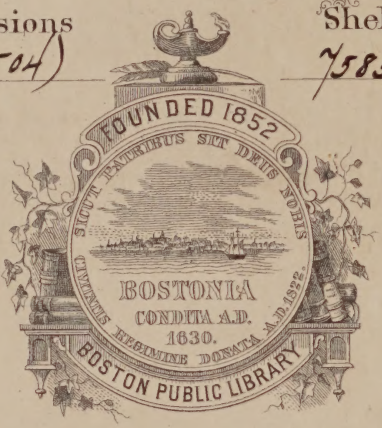

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ANNIVERSARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

ANNUAL ADDRESS,

BY

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ANNUAL ADDRESS.

Although we cannot claim for this anniversary the dignity of ancient origin, nor for the subject of our consideration the interest of novelty, may we not hope that the cause, for the promotion of which we have assembled, is worthy of our best wishes and our united efforts?

By the reminiscences that are awakened at the return of the ancient anniversary of our Commonwealth, which has just passed by, we are carried back through its history, and are almost able to trace the advancement of religion and humanity, by the increasing number of those benevolent associations which have, from year to year, convened in this ancient capital of New-England. At the season when our fathers used to assemble for the election of their rulers, their sons now come together, not to raise an individual to place and power, but to elevate a whole people in the scale of moral worth. And here, we have assembled, on this twenty-seventh anniversary of this Association, to lay our offering upon the altar of benevolence, and to aid those measures which form the distinguishing trait in the character of the age.

It is, however, but one of the many kindred schemes for the improvement of the age, that now claims our attention. Every generous heart has reason for gratitude and delight, that so much is in progress to advance the cause of humanity. There is a spirit awakened that cannot be suppressed, and which, if properly directed, promises a rich result of human happiness and never-fading glory. Ours is an age of action; and it is well to pause, at times, and inquire how far that action is guided by wisdom, and perhaps no occasion is better suited for such an examination, than the commencement of a new year, when the experience of the past sheds its light upon the prospects of the future.

We live not only in an age of action, but what is more to be remarked, in an age of *associated action.* Men move in masses, and individual character and responsibility are well nigh merged in the combined influences by which they are controlled. So few men act, or even think for themselves, that the great, and almost only moral power of the age has become the influence of the public will.

An important lesson may be drawn from this disposition in the human mind to be moved by the force of sympathy, and that is, the danger of yielding to the impulse of feeling, rather than the dictates of judgment. It is always easier to excite passion, than to convince the understanding, and especially is this the case, where the influence of numbers, and a common purpose prepare the mind to receive without suspicion, what, in an isolated condition, it would examine with scrutiny and distrust.

It becomes us to enquire how far the enterprise which has for its object the suppression of intemperance, has been obnoxious to this charge, to which I have alluded.

It has been carried on, thus far, chiefly, by means of associations. Multitudes have crowded its ranks, and public sentiment has wrought a mighty revolution in the moral condition of our country.

The enquiry whether the cause in which we are engaged,

rests, in fact, upon the sober basis of truth, or owes its success to the fitful tide of popular favor, becomes the more important, from the relation in which it now stands to the recent measures by which it is to be sustained.

It is not to be disguised, that the time has come, when the cause of temperance must rest, if at all, upon its own merits. It has risen above the contempt and indifference with which it was long regarded, and stands the object of open or covert attack from debasing passion and sordid self-interest. It is yet to be more severely tried than even during its hours of weakness and adversity. It must stand at last by its own intrinsic merit, or there is no alliance with the civil power which can sustain it.

Fortunately there is no examination, from which it need to shrink. Tried by the soundest principles of philosophy, the cause of temperance will be found based upon immutable truth.

It is the boast of modern philosophy, that discarding hypothesis and speculation, it seeks for facts, and rests its conclusions on facts alone. By this test, let the temperance reformation be tried, for if it can bear this scrutiny, it may scorn the malice of its enemies; if it cannot, it will at last bring certain shame upon its friends.

It is true, we might rest this cause upon the evidence of inspiration, and predicate its success upon the truths of revelation. But there are minds so wayward or obtuse, as to affect to deny this source of evidence, although the precepts of the gospel uniformly accord with the dictates of sound philosophy and refined common sense. And leaving, therefore, for the present, this ground of confidence, let us try this as we do other subjects of investigation by our own observation, the uniform laws of nature, and the uncontradicted evidence of human testimony.

I am the more anxious to apply this test, because we almost daily hear the advocates of this cause branded with the charge of fanaticism and bigotry. And if the charge is not well founded, it is due to themselves that they disabuse their cause of the prejudices that are thereby awakened.

In order to do this the most effectually, we need only recall the facts that form the history of the temperance reform. It has nothing of doubtful authenticity or uncertain antiquity to mislead the mind. There are tens of thousands who may remember the first movement that indicated life in this enterprise. They have watched its progress from its first feeble struggle, till it stands in its manly strength, the hope and glory of its friends, and the terror and shame of its enemies.

I repeat, for upon the truth of the position much of our confidence should depend, there has not been a single step taken in the progress of the great principles of the temperance reform, until facts have been settled which justified the measure. And what is equally encouraging, not a step has thus far been taken from which its friends have found it necessary or proper to recede.

A brief reference to its history will serve to illustrate these remarks. The enterprise had its origin in a regard for the temporal and eternal well-being of mankind. It has lived down the scorn and contempt with which it was first assailed, and now stands strong in the public confidence. If we go back to a period, little more than one third of the estimated age of man, we find New-England, as well as the whole of the United States, in a moral condition calculated to alarm every reflecting mind. A malign influence seemed to be brooding over the land, like that unseen miasma that is stealing upon the city of the Cæsars, and settling down in gloom and terror upon her deserted streets. The very bounties of nature and the blessings of Providence seemed to be converted into sources of misery and wo. Intemperance marked out its victims in every village, and almost every household, till those who thought at all, looked around with doubt and misgiving, to see if there was any rescue or relief.

Others, and by far the greater portion of the community, looked on indifferent and unmoved. They saw the plague-spot developing itself on the drunkard's visage, as they saw the hectic flush on the cheek of the consumptive, and they knew

that death, certain, though sometimes slow, was to be the result. But the idea that a remedy for all this could be found, seems not to have presented itself for a long time to the mind of any one. The lessons of experience were wholly unheeded. The son drank of the same draught that had slain the father, and the mourner went home from the drunkard's burial to drown his own sorrows in the same bowl of which his friend had drunk and died.

But a change was about to be wrought. There were minds that began to reflect, and generous hearts that began to feel, as the enormities of this evil were presented before them. Good men began to urge one another on to an effort to arrest the power of the destroyer, and the first impulse was given to a movement, which, though ill-directed, and well nigh impotent, became an incipient stage in the mighty revolution which was to follow.

The first efforts in this work were ill-directed, because they were based upon false premises. Those who remember a class of associations known as "Moral Societies," that existed for a few years, will recollect that so far as their efforts were directed against intemperance, they regarded it rather as the accident of a necessary and useful habit, than the legitimate consequence of a habit uniformly pernicious.

They acted under such light as they had, and by endeavoring only to restrain the excessive use of one of the "good creatures of God," they not unfrequently created the very appetite that made men slaves to the vice against which they were waging war.

But science soon began to shed her light upon this hitherto dark and doubtful problem of human duty and obligation. It was discovered, and demonstrated as clearly as any physical truth was ever established, that the use of ardent spirit as a beverage in health, was always unnecessary and never safe.

Upon this simple fact, developed by the research, and published by the fidelity of the medical profession, rests the true principle of success in the struggle against intemperance. It

was removing the film from the mental vision in regard to the natural effects of alcohol upon the individual, and showed in a light that all could understand, how disease and death were the price at which indulgence must be purchased.

If investigation, however, had stopped here, there might have been doubt how far motives could be urged against the former habits of society beyond their influence upon the individual health and happiness of its members. But powerful as even this consideration would have been upon liberal minds, the spirit of enquiry which had been aroused was not content to rest satisfied with such partial and narrow results. It traced out the connexion between this cause of private suffering and the more wide-spread evils which pressed upon the community, and it was discovered that the same agent that had wrung tears of bitter anguish from the suffering wife or the heart broken parent, and had hurried its thousands to an early and dishonered grave, had been filling the prisons and the poor houses of the land, and had bred poverty and crime in frightful profusion. It was the developement of truths which till now seemed to have passed unoticed by the public mind. The pioneers in this work went themselves, to the jails and the hospitals, and there, in the sober hours of reflection, gathered from their inmates the solemn, unbought and often dying confessions of their melancholy history, and the united testimony of these wretched victims of vice bore witness to the malignant sway of intemperance. There were seen the trophies of its power, in these fruits of the habits of social life, and of a legalised, honorable business.

No fact in political economy was ever more incontestibly established, than that, at least, three-quarters of the poverty and crime in our land, were the legitimate results of intemperance.

The evidence upon which this position rests, has never been controverted. It is recorded in bold and legible characters upon the walls of every alms-house and penitentiary in our land. And it forms another of those facts, upon which a

benevolent philosophy rests its measures for a salutary and efficient reform. The cause and the extent of the evil having thus been traced out, (and, let me say, the association that has now come together, were among the earliest pioneers in this work of benevolence,) a remedy was, at length, adopted, which accorded with the nature of the malady to which it was to be applied. The principle of its operation was as simple, as the evil upon which it was to act was vast and complicated. But like the great law of nature that moves this vast system of worlds in unison and harmony, it has been found efficient almost in proportion to its simplicity. It was the use of alcohol that created the evil, and it was abstinence from its use alone, that would or could remove it.

This, to us so plain a remedy, was but a few years since a new discovery, and simple as it is, when we consider the extent of its results, it deserves to be recorded as one of the great moral discoveries that distinguish this age of benevolent operations.

It may be thought I have dwelt too long upon this part of our subject, but it has been my design to present it in such a light, that we might understand by what principles this reform should be guided, and might feel the consciousness that our cause is based, not only upon a generous philanthropy, but the soundest philosophy. I have dwelt upon it, that we might not only feel that our cause involves the health and happiness of individuals and families, but the political well-being and prosperity of our whole country.

There is no need of rousing the zeal of fanaticism in such a cause, and bigotry must be sought in a narrower sphere than that which embraces the moral, physical, and political welfare of the whole human family.

It was desirable to analyze the principles of this reform for another reason. It shows the double relation in which we stand towards it, as individuals and as members of the body politic.

The importance of this consideration is sometimes lost sight

of, and measures are often urged with honest zeal in reference to the community at large, which are more properly designed to influence individual opinions, and those only which are favorably inclined to receive impressions. On the other hand, individuals are sometimes found engaged in urging on what is called public sentiment, while they themselves throw a clog upon the enterprise by the weight of their own adverse example. Benevolence alone, and even benevolence and zeal can accomplish little without the guidance of wisdom and sagacity. Where masses are to be moved, a common principle of action must be reached. Considerations which strike only a few minds, are lost upon the many, however wise they may be in the abstract. Men will not cordially unite in sustaining measures, in regard to which they are unenlightened or unconvinced, and if we would influence a community, we must begin at that stage to which the minds of the many have reached, or there is danger of leaving them so far behind in our progress, that if they are moved at all, is rather upon the principle of repulsion than in an onward direction.

There may, therefore, be danger of adopting ultra and indiscreet measures to promote the cause of temperance, for the reason the light that shines clearly in our own minds, may have but partially enlightened the understandings of those upon whom these measures are to operate.

The wisdom of any particular mode of action cannot always be judged of by the individual feelings of those by whom it may be adopted; and it can often be tested only by the general laws of human conduct and the actual results of experience.

You will have anticipated me when I say, that these remarks have reference to some of those measures which have, of late, been made the subject of severe animadversion, as well as to the somewhat vexed question how far associations, as bodies, should extend the application of the principle of abstinence as the basis of their organization, and of their combined action in promoting this enterprise.

I repeat, then, we hold towards the temperance enterprise two relations, the one of a personal or individual character, and the other a social or political one; and what in the one, might not only be proper but even demanded by a decent regard to consistency, may in the other be sometimes, to say the least, ill-advised and indiscreet.

The man who professes to wage war against intemperance, and yet makes a distinction in his own case between intoxication produced by one species of alcoholic drinks and another, savors so much of arrant hypocrisy in his conduct, that no ingenuous mind can brook such inconsistency. It is the natural and inevitable tendency of the mind, when it is once honestly convinced of the true character of an aggregate evil, to regard its modifications, however various, as also deserving reprobation or censure. And so it must be in regard to intemperance. Whoever views its character in its true light, as a personal, social and political evil, cannot fail to reach the same conclusion that it is the *vice of intoxication*, and not the particular guise under which it presents itself, against which his efforts ought to be directed.

Let any man of candor enter the pale, if I may so speak, of temperance, and begin to investigate the true character of that vice with which it is contending, and it is not easy to see where he will rest in his own convictions, short of a practical abstinence from all excitement by intoxicating stimulants. He would find it due to his better judgment, to a regard to consistency, and to a due sense of self-respect, that his own example should not war with his own profession.

The difficulty, however, is not so much in going on with reform in individual cases, as in promoting the first step in the process. Before this can be done, prejudices are to be overcome, habits are to be conquered, reason is to be convinced, and the feelings to become interested. And it is in this stage that the greatest obstacles are to be encountered, and the greatest prudence and discretion exercised. By making requisitions which an ordinary mind in the early stages of its reflections will

not regard with favor, the hope of convincing that mind is at best but feeble; whereas, if the same mind were only called on to condemn the more obvious and offensive forms in which intemperance betrays itself, its judgment could hardly fail to yield assent, and generous feeling would follow sober conviction.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. I am not contending that total abstinence associations are not wise or expedient. So far as men are individually considered, this seems to be the only result to which honest minds can come, if they take the first step in the process in good faith and with proper motives.

But there may be such a thing, regarding their influence on others, or what I have called the social and political influence of this reform, as pressing pledges and limitations too far. The line of demarcation may be too deeply drawn between those who are and those who are yet to be convinced and moved in favor of this enterprise.

The enemies of this reform understand this principle, and have shown that they were ready to avail themselves of it whenever they could turn it to account. When, therefore, during the late session of the legislature, a proposition was made to include wines among the articles interdicted from sale as intoxicating drinks, it was found that the extremes on the one side of the question were ready to join hands with those on the other. The very men who claimed as an inalienable right the privilege of selling alcohol in its grossest forms and for any use, however base, were ready to exclude even the simplest wines from among the commodities of a lawful traffic; while one portion of the advocates for this measure were actuated by a regard for personal consistency, is it too much to say of the others, that they acted from a regard to political effect?

They saw, or thought they saw, that so few in the community had reached that degree of conviction at which they were ready to discard the use of all intoxicating drinks, that a division of public sentiment might thus be effected, which

might be strong enough to re-act upon the great and important measures that had been taken in advancing the cause of temperance.

I make this allusion for no purposes of censure, but to illustrate the views which I have endeavored to enforce, that measures may be expedient and safe, so far as they are to operate upon individuals, which might be far from being judicious in their political bearing.

But I would not be misunderstood in the use of the terms which I am compelled to adopt. I do not use the word *political*, as connected with a party, but as relating to society at large, to those influences which bear upon the body politic in all its multifarious relations, and which, though made up of individuals, yet in some sense is to be regarded as a separate and independent existence.

And I would repeat that it is in its political influences, as thus explained, that we are chiefly interested, at this day, in promoting the cause of temperance.

Little comparatively in the way of new discoveries remains to be accomplished. The true principle of action has already been developed, and its efficiency has been fully tested. Science has done its work. The pulpit has boldly uttered its testimony in the language of inspiration against this enemy of the souls of men. And the work is now in the hands of the people. The great problem is to be solved, whether from this wasting pestilence, this national blight, a people *may* rescue themselves, or *must* look on in passive impotence, to witness its ravages and mourn over its desolations.

In presenting the political influences of intemperance, I am anxious to distinguish the measures which are called for, in this view of the subject, from what is commonly understood as political action. I know not how any true friend of temperance can ever wish to wed that cause to any religious sect or political party. If it had no better support than the favor of a political party, I care not how strong or numerous it is, or by what name it is called, it could not stand an hour. Party spirit

is a moral malaria that taints and poisons every thing which comes within its influence. Nothing can flourish within its atmosphere but politics themselves, and those only by being adapted to breathe its poisonous exhalations. If the question of the ultimate success of temperance should ever come to be settled as a mere party measure, by the bare vote of majorities, the struggle would be too unequal to hope for any thing but defeat. One bar-room or grog shop would do more to rouse the partisan passions of the multitude, than the warmest appeal of the most eloquent advocate of truth.

That the friends of temperance may not, nay—that they would not be recreant to their duty, if they did not exercise the rights of freemen at the ballot box, and in enacting and sustaining salutary laws, I would be the last to maintain. But he has read the history of sects and parties to little purpose, who could wish to see the cause of temperance prevail as a mere party triumph or the principles on which it rests, subverted by a political party revolution.

In considering the political influence of intemperance, there is one suggestion of grave import which results from the very nature of our government. It has few of those guards that sustain the governments of the old world, in periods of internal commotion. It has no physical barrier to interpose between itself and those outbreaks of violence and passion, to which all communities are more or less subject. There is not, in other words, in the elements of our government, any thing to guard the people against their own excesses in periods of excitement, except the habits of self-respect which result from moral influences. Every thing, therefore, which tends to weaken this moral sense, to impair this self-respect, and to encourage a spirit of misrule in the community, does a lasting injury to the stability of our government. It saps the foundation on which it rests, and every triumph of a mob is the triumph of the people over their own liberties.

It would lead me beyond the limits of your indulgence, if I were to trace in all its relations, the connexion that exists be-

tween intemperance and the causes that tend to paralyze the salutary powers of a popular government. One thing is obvious, that where the people are the foundation of civil power, it is in vain to hope for pure streams where the fountain is corrupt. And even where the slow process of corruption has not contaminated the whole mass, causes of excitement may arise from time to time, which only need some quickening spark to light the train that passion may have laid. And that spark is within the reach of every madman, waiting only the laying of the train it is to fire, so long as the dram shop shall be found on every way-side, and its maddening poisons may be dealt out at pleasure to rouse the slumbering passions of the thoughtless and the wicked. There is a dark page in our country's history which records the frightful ravages of lawless mobs, and there is a fearful portent in the fact that in a country so free, the restraints of moral and political obligation should be found so weak. But never, we believe, in all the history of mobs, has there been one whose excesses might not be traced directly or indirectly to the influence of intoxicating stimulants. It is not in their cool moments that the people turn traitors to themselves; and if ever our liberties are to be broken down, it will not be by the hand of a foreign foe; they will sink beneath the blows of domestic violence, when vice and corruption shall have undermined the basis on which they rest.

It is in this light that this subject assumes an importance far transcending the consideration of personal happiness or misery of the individual victims of a vicious indulgence. It concerns the body politic as a whole, and calls for a remedy that shall be adequate to protect that body politic.

I need not say that that remedy can be nothing short of the interposition by the body politic, of restraints which shall take from intemperance the means by which it spreads and perpetuates itself. Nor need I say that under a government like ours that restraint can only be imposed by *Law*.

Men may reason as they will;—if a body politic cannot do this, men have gained little by entering into the social state.

If society may not protect itself from this as well as from other evils with which it may be afflicted, it is idle to boast of being free, it has a yoke upon its neck that is more galling than the yoke of physical bondage.

I know that the power of legislating to this extent is openly denied by not a few in this age of boasted light, and in this land of boasted freedom. And while almost every subject of police regulation is conceded to be within the scope of legislative control, the sale of rum is too high and sacred a privilege to be infringed or scarcely to be modified. While the law may restrain the minor sources of corruption, or punish as a crime the sale of unwholesome meats from the butcher's stall, or adulterated drugs from the apothecary's shop—while the law declares the drinking of ardent spirit a crime, if it produces its natural and often almost necessary effect: it may not lay its hand upon a traffic in that which does more to corrupt society, to destroy the public peace, and multiply crime than all other causes combined, lest, forsooth, it invade the "home-bred rights" of him who makes his gains out of the follies, the vices, or the madness of his fellow-men.

The law may regulate the traffic by restricting the ninety and nine, but if it touch with sacrilegious hand, the single favored monopolist of this licensed branch of trade, the passions of a whole people are to be aroused against it. The stream may be "regulated," but you may neither check its flow nor diminish one drop of its waters, though they scatter pestilence and death through every village in the land.

There is in all this, a refinement in distinction, that is beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds. There are not a few, who cannot perceive, under a government designed for the protection of all, the sacredness of that claim, which many set up in behalf of the traffic in rum. They regard it as a separation of cause and effect, which neither comports with the principles of common sense nor of sound philosophy. If it is not right to set fire to your neighbor's house, by what scale of morals could it be justified that the torch which is to light the

flame should be placed in the hands of a madman, that he might do the deed? If I may not enter my poor neighbor's dwelling, to snatch the food from his children's mouths, or strip them of the scanty raiment that protects them from the winter's cold, what right have I, in the sight of a just God, to send into that dwelling that which I know will bring nakedness and hunger upon every inmate within its walls?

I know it is said that the act of purchasing and using ardent spirit is a voluntary one, over which the seller does not exercise control, and that it is among those acts of personal free agency, with which the law has no right to interfere. And suppose we yield to this position, so far as the use of what is thus sold is confined in its effects to the individual himself, it does not affect the principle that the law may restrain the traffic. Not only do the consequences of this traffic reach beyond the individuals immediately engaged in it, but they affect the most important relations in life, which the law itself has created, and by the preservation of which, society can alone exist.

The law has chained the destiny of the wife to that of her husband, by bonds that death alone can sever. It has placed the child under its parents' control during that plastic age when the character assumes its form for time, and often for eternity, from the impress it receives from a mother's precepts or a father's example. And is it nothing to that wife, or to those little ones, that a husband is changed to a brute, and a father transformed into a demon? Is it nothing to society that the hopes and energies of that wife should be crushed, or that those children should grow up in ignorance and vice? Surely, if society may not protect itself from that which weakens and destroys the fundamental principles of its very organization, the bond by which it is held together must be frail as the spider's web.

But these are not the only relations that are injuriously affected by a traffic which scatters the means of intemperance broadcast over the land. There is not a relation in life, whether it be that of friend with friend, or the more extended intercourse

of neighborhood kindness, or the still wider duties of citizenship, that are not jeopardized or violated by what may be regarded as the natural consequences of the sale of alcohol as a beverage. And strange as the doctrine seemed, but a few years since, that this traffic was immoral, the position that the law ought to restrain it altogether, except for purposes of medicine and the arts, rests now upon principles as immutable as those which form the basis of the prosperity, the happiness and the very existence of the body politic.

And, as we look forward to the future prospects of the temperance enterprise, it is among the strongest grounds of hope, that the right to restrain a traffic so pregnant with evil, has become established in the public mind, or in other words, that legislation has come to the aid of temperance.

It is not upon the fact that any particular law has been enacted, that these hopes should rest. Scarce any law could be enacted, that may not be, in some minds, of questionable expediency in some of its details. It is, if I may so say, that the current of legislation has turned. The false premises on which former laws were based, have been detected and exposed, and the public will as indicated by legislative action, has received a new direction.

Our early laws on this subject, may have been all that could have been expected, with the degree of knowledge upon it that then existed. Assuming that spirituous liquors were one of the necessaries of life, they could not well do more than regulate its use. But for the last twenty years, previous to 1838, legislation was not only against temperance, but against light and truth. It proclaimed the false and exploded doctrine that the public good required the sale of alcohol as a drink. Wherever the friend of temperance turned, he was met by a registered denial of the truth of what he uttered, and many a conscience found a salvo to itself in the legal sanction which a christian people had thrown around the business of dealing out that which creates and perpetuates the drunkenness that defiles the land.

That such should be the course of legislation, amidst all the light that science had shed upon this subject, not only justified those who chose not to be convinced, but it confounded those who were willing to seek for the truth. It required something more than an ordinary exercise of independence of mind, to come out against the settled principle of a law; and every step that the temperance reformation advanced, was in the very face of legal presumptions. But by the change in legislation, the shield has been removed, under the cover of which intemperance has been waging war upon our community.

It is not that the law has provided penalties to restrain the traffic, so much as it is that that traffic is declared to be wrong, that the enactment of a law is to be regarded as so salutary in its consequences. It is the recording in a constitutional form a great moral truth. It is declaring through the organ of a whole community that the time-honored sanctions of the trade in rum, have been based upon false premises. And let what will come, that truth thus registered cannot fail to have its influence on the public mind.

Many seem to be apprehensive that the law recently enacted will eventually be repealed, and are ready therefore to infer that it was an unwise measure to enact it at all.

Tried in the scale of mere political expediency, there may be truth in the remark. There never was a law that curtailed the business of men that was not opposed, however doubtful the morality of that business may have been. It was on this ground that an outcry was raised against christianity at Ephesus. Luther roused the vengeance of the whole Catholic priesthood, for daring to impugn the business of selling indulgencies. The horrid abominations of the slave trade were sustained, for years, against the spread of light and knowledge, on the same ground. It was not by argument but by self-interest, that the friends of that trade met the arguments by which they were opposed. The gold that was in one scale outweighed the demands of justice in the other, and furnished another instance where the temporal and eternal happiness, nay, the very souls of our fellow men have been bartered in open market for sordid pelf.

It always was, and it always will be that self-interest is a more active principle than the sense of moral duty ; and create a business that promises profit, and then license that business, and I care not what may be its character, it will be openly tolerated and pursued. The greater the profits, the more numerous will be the persons who will be interested to sustain any class of business, and the greater will be the obstacles which will be thrown in the way of attempts to suppress it. It is what ought to have been anticipated in relation to the traffic in rum. We ought not to be surprised at any sort of combination to sustain it or to nullify the law that forbids the sale; though it could hardly have been expected that decent and respectable men could have been found who would trifle with official oaths, and do violence to their own consciences to shelter the violators of this law from the hand of justice. But suppose the very worst, suppose that personal and political combinations and that measure of a politician's morals—*political expediency*—should for a while succeed in repealing this law or rendering it a dead letter, what has been lost? Nay, what, comparing the present with the past, has not been gained? There it stands, and there its language will stand, declaring a truth which all the political combinations in the world cannot gainsay or blot out of the memory.

Selfishness, ignorance and bigotry could extort from Galileo the confession that his discovery of the earth's motion was not true. But still the earth moved on in her orbit, and the truth which he published amidst scorn, persecution and contempt still lives in all its primitive simplicity and grandeur.

So is it with moral truth, and come what changes there may, the solemn declaration of the people of Massachusetts in 1838, will stand out in letters of light, when the mists of prejudice and error shall have passed away.

It is not, however, merely in the consciousness that Massachusetts has set her seal of reprobation upon the traffic, that temperance has cause to take courage in its efforts. She stands not alone in this moral revolution. The West, the teeming, the

vigorous West, with her free and manly spirit of reform, has uttered her testimony in the cause which will, ere long, find a response in the recorded legislation of the older sections of the Union, till a moral influence will at last be created that must be irresistible.

Individuals, it is true, may sometimes be found who, from a spirit of bravado, will set at defiance laws, both human and divine. But few can do this beyond the excitement of an hour. They cannot stand up like men, even when violating human laws. Presumptions rise against them, and conscience will not keep quiet. The gains that are unsanctioned by law become ill-gotten treasures, and their very enjoyment brings with it a sting.

An illustration of this may be found in those instances of a voluntary abandonment of the traffic in ardent spirit, which are daily coming to our knowledge. And examples like these ought not to be forgotten on an occasion like this. There has not been a more noble or honorable sacrifice made by the most devoted friend of temperance, than many of the former dealers in alcohol have made. They have abandoned a business, once honorable and lucrative, and have sacrificed upon the altar of public good, both property and profit, and have furnished an example that every generous mind must regard with approbation and respect.

It shows that high-minded men if they will but reflect, will not stoop to the open or secret violation of a public law, for the mere gains of an unlawful business.

And so obviously is there a tendency to consequences like this, that it has been gravely urged as an objection to a law prohibiting the sale of ardent spirit, that the business would nevertheless be pursued, and would pass out of respectable hands into the holes and dens, where the low and vile will herd together.

If such would be the effect, the sooner it is driven to these retreats the better. The lower it sinks the more easily is it controlled. The farther it is removed from decent life, the less

is the danger of its scattering the seeds of corruption. In the depths of his own Hell, Satan was impotent to corrupt the innocent. It was in the honied tone of soft persuasion, in the broad light of day, and amidst the beauties of Paradise itself, that he stole upon the unsuspecting innocence of the parents of our race.

If the poisonous streams of intemperance must flow, let it be wide from the marts of business, the abodes of comfort, and the pathways of the young. Compel every one who is yet pure, before he can reach temptation, to descend from the dignity of self-respect to a companionship with drunkards in their own haunts, and you will arrest his step ere he has passed that bourne from which so few return.

In such a consummation as this, there would be hope too for the wretched and the seemingly lost. There is not a more grateful duty to the true friend of temperance, than the effort to snatch from the power of the destroyer the victims of a degrading vice. To the drunkard even, there sometimes come hours of reflection and remorse, when the heart feels, and reason begins to revive. If temptation could then be removed, if the cup that steals away his senses could be withheld till reason had resumed her control over his appetite and passions, a human being might be snatched from a drunkard's grave, and a human soul be saved from a drunkard's doom.

I cannot forbear in this connexion, alluding again to the determined opposition which has been threatened to the existing law in restraint of the sale of ardent spirit, both by individuals and by combinations of men. That there should be men weak, not to say wicked enough, to enter into such combinations, is not strange. But that legislators or jurors, or any class of men who value their character and influence in society, and who are capable of forming a judgment for themselves upon this, as well as other subjects, should be found willing to lend their influence in favor of a systematic disregard of this or any other law, constitutionally enacted, is indeed most strange. Can such men ever reflect upon the inevitable tendency of such

principles? Can they be willing to disregard or disobey a law because, to their view, the enactment of it was inexpedient? Suppose this principle were carried out, where should we stop? Grant, for a moment, that a large number in the community regard this law unwise or improper, can that be a good ground for putting it at defiance! And how much better is the argument in the mouths of such men, that because a law will be violated, it ought never to have been adopted? If the law regulating the sale of spirituous liquors is to be violated at all, it is by the very men who in their spirit of prophecy have foretold the violation. And these, too, are among the loudest advocates for "moral suasion." They could listen to such "suasion," with a seeming conviction that "temperance was a very good thing," and yet are shocked beyond measure if the same declaration is made by the people at large; and are as ready to violate a law which enforces this principle, as they have ever been to resist the power of this so much lauded "moral suasion."

If it is right to reject this law because it is opposed to the opinions of a class in the community, why may not every law in our statute book be alike disregarded? There are those for instance, who affect to consider the laws of marriage and the laws of property as creating unequal and unjust monopolies. And suppose these men should combine to resist these laws, and should call to their aid the passions and jealousies of the low, and vile, and wicked, how long would government or law be maintained? How long would even life itself be safe or worth possessing? It is said that there are men of character and wealth in the community who are willing to lend their influence in resisting the License law of 1838. They may not need the protection of that law for their own security, but there are tens of thousands who without it are without protection from the ruffian passions of drunken madmen. And do such men while reposing securely upon their couches of ease, ever think of the consequences of weakening the hold which the law has for its support, upon the confidence of the people?

If I could imagine that any such were present here, I would ask them in the spirit of earnest inquiry, where is your safety if this barrier is broken down? You know that while you are surrounded with all the luxuries that wealth can command, there are hundreds and thousands in the land who are compelled to toil for their daily bread. And where, independent of the laws of society, do you find the right to insist upon this inequality of condition in life? Suppose some selfish, idle miscreant, should artfully appeal to the envious passions, or the wants, and feelings of injustice that are so easily roused in the minds of some men against the more favored classes in the community, with what argument beyond the law and the preservation of society, could you meet the demand that your garnered wealth should be shared with them as the common heritage of man? And how could you demand of them that they should respect the law that protects your property, while you yourselves were in open violation of laws as constitutionally enacted and as solemnly sanctioned, as the very laws to which you appeal? I pray you to look into the tenure by which you hold the fruits of your own industry, and see if your guaranty is not too precarious to be madly put at hazard.

If every man's prejudice, or even if his own deliberate judgment is to be the test by which he is to try every law, and to determine whether he will obey it, statutes will cease to be binding. A violation of law will cease to be a crime. Knavery and fraud will run riot in their iniquity. Lust and revenge will stalk abroad at noon-day, and violence and rapine will reap the fruits which honest industry has planted. Throw aside the law, the constitutionally declared rule of civil conduct, and there is nothing upon which the state can rest for a moment. When that barrier is broken down, there is nothing between the people and ruin. There is no power in reserve to which they can appeal for protection.

I have already dwelt, perhaps too long, upon this subject, and yet it is too momentous to be at once dismissed. Our most valuable blessings are often the least thought of, because they

are universally enjoyed. It is so with the influence of the *Law*. Like the air we breathe, or the sun light in which we walk forth, we share its blessings as a common boon, and grow unconscious of the value of that enjoyment. It watches over us and ours in our most unguarded moments. In the graphic language of another, "when we go forth, it walks silent and unobtrusive by our side, covering us with its invisible shield from violence and wrong. Beneath our own roof or by our own fire-side, it makes our home our castle. All ages, sexes and conditions, share its protecting influence. It shadows with its wing the infant's cradle, and with its arm upholds the tottering steps of age."

Such are some of the offices of that invisible principle which we denominate the Law, that holds society together and keeps in harmony its jarring elements. And who, let me again ask, for some paltry gain, or some poor triumph over an unsatisfactory statute, can be found willing, wantonly to violate this principle, and put at hazard all that makes wealth valuable, or life secure.

We have spoken of the past, and have dwelt upon the present condition of the temperance cause, and it is with no ordinary feelings of pleasure that we may turn to the future prospects that await it. We may now see those elements at work, which, with the blessing of Providence, cannot fail to insure success to this glorious enterprise.

Time will not admit of our considering these in detail, but it is due to some of them that they should not be passed over in silence. To one, at least, I may refer, although its importance seems not to have been always properly appreciated, and that is, the influence of Woman. We have no occasion to stop to define the limits of her appropriate sphere of action, for here, surely is a field where her influence has already been witnessed in the cause of benevolence. Others may ask for her a wider field of ambition than the walks and duties of domestic life. But who that regards the history of the past, or the character of the present age, can doubt the power which the sex always

ANNUAL MEETING.

ANNUAL MEETING

Of the Massachusetts Temperance Society.

THIS ancient Society held its twenty-seventh annual meeting for business in the Old Court House, Friday Evening, May 30th, 1839, the President, JOHN C. WARREN, in the chair.

The records of the last annual meeting having been read, the Annual Report of the Council for the past year was read. It was voted "to accept it, and that it should be printed."*

The Treasurer, CHARLES TAPPAN, next made a report on the treasury, which was accepted.

The following resolutions were then presented and adopted.

Resolved, That the law of 1838 deserves our support. The principles are fully established, viz: that the retail traffic in spirituous liquors in small quantities is injurious to individuals, to families, and to communities —and that it is the duty of legislators to make such laws as will effectually abate such "nuisance."

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* During the reading of the report, the noise accompanying the exercises of a military company overhead, making it difficult to hear the reader, a committee of the society waited upon the Commander, General Davis, to inform him of the meeting, and to ascertain when the drill would be over. The committee, on their return, reported that the exercises would be over in a few minutes, which happened shortly after, when the following vote was presented and passed by the meeting:

Voted, That the thanks of this society be presented to General Davis and the military company under his command, for the prompt and courteous manner in which they have, in their exercises above, consulted the feelings and convenience of this society in its deliberations below.

Resolved, That the friends of temperance must regard the present as a most important time in this cause. Never was public attention more strongly awakened to its interests, and never was the prospect brighter of its widest success.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, the following declaration contained in a minority report of the committee of the Legislature of 1839, on the "Law regulating the sale of spirituous liquors," of 1839, is sound doctrine, viz:—

"All common dram shops are hereby declared to be public nuisances, and it shall be the duty of the Selectmen of any town, and of the Mayor and Aldermen of any city, to proceed against any common dram shop within such town or city, and the person or persons keeping the same, in the same manner that a board of health or health officers, is authorized by the revised statutes to proceed in the prosecution for and removal of nuisances, sources of filth, and causes of sickness." Sec. 4, p. 27.

The third resolution was supported by Messrs. RIDER, of Bridgewater, and JAMES SAVAGE, of Boston, in addresses, giving at length the arguments for the law, and its whole claims for support. These addresses were listened to with the deepest interest, and the strongest feeling manifested to sustain the law. No question was made that it would be executed, and its whole benefit to individuals and communities were eloquently shown.

The next resolution was as follows:—

Resolved, That those individuals, who, amid the reproach and obloquy which have been cast upon them by the opponents of the law of 1838, with great labor and self-sacrifice are exerting themselves to effectually enforce said law, are well deserving the approbation and gratitude of every friend of temperance.

This was carried by acclamation as soon as it was presented; and when the President observed upon reading the resolution, that it had been adopted before the question had been put, and a vote was made unnecessary, the strongest expression was again manifested of approbation of the sentiment it contained.

ALDEN BRADFORD offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That we learn with great pleasure, that the friends of temperance in this city, propose to celebrate the ensuing 4th of July on temperance principles, by a public dinner at Faneuil Hall, and that we hope that temperance celebrations of the day may be held throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. Bradford made an earnest and eloquent appeal in favor of the doctrines and practice of temperance. He spoke of that political revolution which had brought political freedom, with all its privileges and blessings, to the American people, and alluded to the place, old Faneuil Hall, which had been the scene

of the earliest, and to us, dearest movements of that revolution. We now proposed, he observed, to consecrate that Hall, and the day of the declaration of independence, to a celebration of the moral freedom with which the temperance reform has already blessed our land,—and to earnest prayer that this truest freedom, may rapidly become the cherished blessing of the whole nation.

In remarking on this meeting it should be said, that it was one of, if not the fullest meeting for business, known in the history of the society. It must have been truly grateful to every one present to hear such unqualified approbation of the cause, and of the means now in operation for its progress, as it came from men deserving the fullest confidence of the community; and to witness the expression of gratification with which important truths were received.

It was acknowledged, in the course of the discussions of the evening, that some misgivings had been entertained, some doubts, some fears, as to particular measures which had been adopted in the course of the reform. But it was as freely and fully declared that these doubts and fears had been entirely put at rest—that new confidence in the cause came with the events of every day—that opposition, however violent, had only led to greater vigilance—to new examination of principles—to better views as to modes of applying them—in short, that conviction had been strengthened by time, and resolution confirmed, to pursue that course which experience had demonstrated to be the right, the true one.

The friends of temperance every where are encouraged in duty by all such enunciations. They are important facts in the history of moral reform. They urge it upon us to labor to carry the light and the truth to every mind,—they show us that we are to rejoice in the new light which comes to us, whatever may be its source. This reform regards all men as brethren. It began with this truth as its corner-stone. It will never lose sight of it in its onward way. It has taken its place among the agencies and means which propose the highest good to men It is the duty of all good men to sustain it there.

The society was organized for the ensuing year as follows:—

JOHN C. WARREN, PRESIDENT.
SAMUEL DORR, VICE PRESIDENT.†
WALTER CHANNING, SECRETARY,
CHARLES TAPPAN, TREASURER.
MOSES GRANT,
CHARLES BROWN,
STEPHEN FAIRBANKS,
HENRY EDWARDS. } COUNCILLORS.

MEETING FOR THE ADDRESS.

This meeting was held at the Odeon, June 2d, 1836. The room was filled at an early hour. Prayer having been offered by the Rev. Mr. Bartoll, and a hymn sung, an address was delivered by Emory Washburn, Esq. of Worcester.

This address is before the public. It is a close logical argument for the principles of the temperance reform, and especially for the law of 1838. At the same time it is full of eloquent appeals for the cause,—of powerful and touching illustrations of great principles, and truly christian moderation, in their enforcement. Uncompromising firmness goes hand in hand with a noble philanthropy.

The society, and members of other societies were called together at the close of the meeting and the following votes passed:

Voted, That the thanks of the Massachusetts Temperance Society be presented to Emory Washburn, Esq., for his eloquent and appropriate address delivered this evening, and that a copy of the same be requested for publication by the Council of said society.

Voted, That the thanks of this society be presented to the choir of singers and the organist for their services this evening.

W. CHANNING, *Secretary.*

Boston, June 2d, 1839.

† Jonathan Phillips declined re-election.

ANNUAL REPORT.

ANNUAL REPORT.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE MASSACHUSETTS TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, READ, ACCEPTED AND ORDERED TO BE PRINTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY, HELD MAY 31, 1839.

The past year, like that which preceded it, has presented matters of deep interest to the friends of the temperance reform. The law of 1838, regulating the sale of spirituous liquors, was not to go into operation till April, 1839. It was to be thus before the whole Commonwealth for a year, to be sifted with an unsparing scrutiny,—to be beat upon by the whole power of argument, proceeding from the great political, moral, and economical interests of the State,—to be tried at the severe bar of ridicule,—in short, to be the absorbing topic of town and country for a whole long year. But more, much more than all this, the law of 1838, was to be submitted to a graver scrutiny,—to a sterner bar than any before which it had yet been called. A session of the legislature was to begin, and to end, before the law could be put into operation, and it was well known that the whole machinery of opposition had been put into motion in preparation of the new legislature for its discussion and for its repeal.

Soon after the opening of the session, the subject was brought forward in a memorial to repeal. The memorial was committed to a committee of one from each county, and notice was given both to memorialists and remonstrants that they would be heard by counsel and otherwise, as might by them be thought best.

Then came petitions for and against the repeal from all parts of the state. Against the repeal was a majority said to be about fourteen thousand, besides thousands of women who were on the same side. The committee had numerous meetings. Patient hearings were given day after day, to witnesses from all professions, all occupations, from all portions of the state. Able counsel were heard on both sides. A report modifying the law was made by the committee. There were besides, two minority reports, one proposing modifications, and one made by a single member of the committee only, demanding an unconditional repeal.

Immediately succeeding, nay, accompanying the debates on the report of the majority, various modes of changing the law of 1838 were suggested. Sometimes this was done by introducing amendments,—sometimes new bills,—and sometimes in the form of orders to the judiciary committee to bring in certain modifications, or entirely new measures. Such, in brief space, is a sketch of the means used to modify or repeal the law. But after the very fullest discussion of every measure or suggestion, it was finally voted, that the law of 1838 should remain on the statute book; or, in other words, that it be neither modified nor repealed. It is, then, the law of the land, and, as such, it deserves serious consideration.

Let us now look at this law as a portion of that great system of laws on which so much of our liberty and happiness depends. It is in this its personal, its social relation, that law with us acquires its paramount interest. In a democratic state, as is America, law has its whole significance,—its true dignity;—its legitimate authority. In such a state, the whole people having a share in the making of laws, and having a stake in

their execution, give to them a portion of attention which under other than free governments they never do receive. The law of 1838, we may emphatically call it *the* law, was particularly liable to this scrutiny. Though it really involved no new principle of legislation, it was not difficult to say that it did; and it was found easy to support the assertion with much that might be regarded as conclusive argument. Then it affected deeply the community. It proposed to alter practice, custom, habit, when, it might be, opinion remained unchanged. The mass of men, the majority in the state, proposed a great change in what is always attended with difficulty, on the sole ground that the highest moral duty, the whole tenor of christianity demanded the change. A law which is sustained by a people under the whole circumstances which have been brought to bear upon, and against it for a whole year, must have its defence in the deepest moral principle, of the state. Morality must be the basis of such a law of such a state, and morality here must be founded in christianity, if the people be blessed with the christian revelation.

Again. The law of 1838, not only proposed changes in custom, but its operation must affect widely individual interest. Suppose it to be successful in its whole agency in the state, it must diminish comparatively to nothing, the consumption as drink of the various combinations of alcohol; and thus bring its manufacture and its sale within such limits as to alter greatly individual industry, and so the use of capital. But admitting all this, the necessary, not contingent, evils of intemperance, were felt to be so great, and were known to be so widely spread over the state, that public good, and public duty demanded that a check should be put to the evil, just where it was known to have its earliest beginning, and its gravest consummation.

Different views have been taken of the law of 1838, and various opinions offered, both as to its being executed, and of its whole operation on the temperance cause. By many, it has been regarded as an experiment, which if on trial it be found unsuccessful, it may be repealed, and a substitute be

made. How far this view may be just in regard to any legislative act, we do not stop to consider. Laws should always proceed from the present demand for their agency. They should be founded in the best established principles. They are not necessarily always and directly in operation. The circumstances which led to their formation belonging to the constitution of man, or to his social relations, and these being more or less permanent, the law often remains even after that which directly led to it, may for the time have ceased, except it be in matters of merely temporary and local interest, the law in regard to such, wholly ceasing with what gave it birth. The law of 1838, had its origin in what had long existed, and which had became habitual, viz. intemperance.—It is designed to diminish this evil at once ; and in its continued operation to do what can be done, to do it away altogether. It must be after trial only, that it can be settled how far the law is suited to these great ends, and so far, and so far only, must this particular legislation be regarded as experimental. If it answer not the end, the people may at any time change it, or do it entirely away.

A question has been made, "will the law be executed?" If our view of law,—of any and all law, be correct, viz. that it is the exponent of the public opinion, the public morality, this question can hardly be entertained. "Will the law be executed?" We answer, in the first place, that laws execute themselves. A particular law being demanded, and enacted, the very fact of its having existence as a law, secures its execution. What, is it not the voice of the people, speaking by authority, and for a certain specific object? And who is he that understands its sanctions, and his own social obligations, was ever found to resist its power,—oppose its execution? What is the fact in regard to this very law now under consideration? Has it, or has it not been obeyed? The law was to go into operation the first of April, 1839. But at that very time, and for a third of the month more, the legislation was gravely considering propositions of all kinds for modifying that law,—and

since the session closed, resolutions have been adopted and published far and wide, purporting to proceed from a convention of whig members of the late general court, the whole object of which is manifestly to embarrass the execution of the law. But taking all this into the account, and with it the opposition to the law of a portion of the public press, let the question again be made, "has, or has not the law been executed?" We would answer this question only as we are warranted by reported facts, and looking at them alone, we feel prepared to say that the operation of the law of 1838, has thus far been highly salutary,—the extent to which it has been conformed to is as great as its friends could have anticipated; and its entire good agency is safely to be calculated on.

In this expression of their belief, the Council would not be understood to say that the law had been universally obeyed. They know it has not. Nor is this at all inconsistent with what they hold to be the truth in the matter, nor is it at all to be wondered at. Habit and interest, and the strong support of enemies of the law, among whom are men of consideration in the community,—these have done and continue to do much to embarrass its operation in communities in which they have most power. Especially is this the case with regard to the influence of the class of individuals which has been referred to. The law has been violated. The law will continue here and there to be violated. But throughout the great and most important parts of the state, has it not been, and is it not respected? We believe it will continue to be executed. We would not hazard so grave, and as we believe so false a charge upon the people of this State, as to say that a law solemnly enacted will not be executed. We have not made this charge. We will not. We have in our minds the laws against the sale of lottery tickets, stealing, counterfeiting, &c. Who will say that these laws are not obeyed, because here and there men are to be found ready to violate any or all of them, and this notwithstanding the reprobation such persons and their acts meet with from the respectable and good men of the whole community? No. Let

the law remain if its great ends are obtained, and let us rejoice that its power and blessed ministry are so widely felt, notwithstanding the strange efforts that are making to prevent its execution.

The Council cannot but express their strong hope that those who have deep interests in the State,—who understand the nature and obligations of law, and whose power must be felt whether used in support of, or against the laws of the Commonwealth,—the Council do hope that such men, whether legislators or not, will give to this great subject the whole consideration it demands, and take their place openly, and generously on the side of *Law*, and thus consecrate themselves, their character, and their example, to the highest and best interests of the State. These topics are alluded to in no bitterness of spirit, in no feeling that those who openly oppose the law, do so from any desire or purpose to disturb the public peace. But has there not been a great and grave mistake made in regard to this matter? Has not a part of the opposition to this law had its growth in a sympathy, with a class of men, who do not in this matter deserve it. Is it, we respectfully ask, in the spirit of the great principles of human freedom, and in the alleged violation of these principles by this law, that the present war upon it has been declared. We cannot think so. And in what are the true reasons and defence of the law of 1838 to be found? We answer without qualification, in the whole, and the unmixed misery of intemperance. The whole sympathy of the friends of the law is with multitudes of men, and women,—yes women and children, (let us not be deterred from, or ashamed of publishing it every where) who are daily and hourly suffering from intemperance after a manner unequalled by all other forms and complications of human wo. Is it said by the opponents of the law "we know all this,—we have intemperance in its most disgusting forms, at our own fire-sides; we see, nay, we daily and hourly *feel*, the unmixed evil of intemperance? You will gain nothing from us to your cause by such appeals." This is said. The friend of the law hears

this daily. But let it never for a moment stop his mouth Silence in him will be a crime, until every body in every community knows and feels, nay more, acknowledges the whole misery of drunkenness, and the supreme, the paramount value of any law which may check it, or entirely bring it to an end.

In several states, within the last year, laws have been passed regulating the retail traffic in spirituous liquors as drink. Among these is Tennessee, Mississippi, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont. In Ohio, efforts are in progress for the same end. In Cincinnati, in that State, most efficient means are in progress. For all this, the friends of temperance cannot be too grateful. They see in it that hand, which in conducting the affairs of the universe, has human good, and human happiness only in view. They have prayed for the divine blessing on their labors. Let them ever trust in the divine goodness.

The Council cannot but refer to the effect produced on many minds abroad, by the passage of the law of 1838 in Massachusetts. A member of the Council was in England when the law was passed, and first heard of its passage, there. He had opportunities from being much in society, to learn the opinions of men of great weight in that kingdom, regarding important movements of the day. When the papers were received containing the law of 1838, this law became a leading topic of interest and remark. It was looked upon as strong evidence of the progress of society here. It was said openly that a people who could pass such a law, and with such majorities, deserved the respect, the sincere respect, of every civilized State. Here was a law, said they, coming directly in aid of a moral reform of unparalleled interest; and it was added, that a people who had moral power enough to pass such a law, possessed a political force and strength which could not be regarded with indifference. These were the expressed opinions of men of rank, of power, of influence, who have a deep interest in the highest civilization, in that, namely, which is the result of the purest morality.

The active operations of the Council the past year, have been confined very much to this city. This was the case in the preceding year as stated in the last annual report. These efforts have been principally directed to a new county organization of the friends of temperance, which had become necessary by the changes made in the wards by the city government. The agent of the Massachusetts Temperance Union, was employed by the Council for this object, and entire success has attended his efforts. Each ward has its committee with specific duties,—and an Executive Committee composed of one from each ward, has been formed. Quarterly meetings are held under the direction of this committee, of the friends of temperance,—while more frequent meetings are held in the wards. At no time has a better spirit prevailed in regard to the reform, in this city. The meetings are full, and the discussions of great interest. One object in this organization is to ascertain facts in regard to the cause. This is an important object. It has been said of late, time and again, that the statistics of intemperance are exaggerations,—that the temperance cause finds sympathy in its over-statements of the pauperism, vice and crime, that are said to be produced by drunkenness. Let us, then, go to facts anew,—study this matter as one of deepest interest to society, and give the results to the public. This has been the course from the beginning, let it be always fearlessly and faithfully followed.

Among the movements of the past year in which the Council took part, should be particularized the Convention held by the friends of temperance at the Odeon, January last. This Convention was unusually large, showing that the occasion was regarded as highly important. The discussions were ably sustained. The resolutions which were debated and adopted, manifested a steady purpose in each member of the Convention, to promote to his ability the progress of the reform. The whole proceedings of the sessions are before the public, which makes a more extended notice here unnecessary.

A temperance celebration of the fourth of July in Worcester,

should be remembered among the very pleasant occurrences of the past year. Many hundreds of the firm friends of the reform from that and other counties, assembled at an early hour, and went in procession to the church, where thanksgiving and praise were offered for the divine blessing which had attended on the cause, and prayer that it might still be vouchsafed. The meeting was next addressed by many of the assembly, and resolutions offered and adopted. From the church, the company went to a pavilion erected for the purpose, in which a collation had been provided. After dinner, sentiments were offered, and addresses made. Few occasions have been more pleasant, or will be remembered with more pleasure. There was an assembly of good men and true, from the heart of the great central county of the state,—men who might be relied on both in regard to the doctrines they might hold, and the mode in which they might practice or promulgate them. Bring such men to the support of a good cause—give them an interest in the progress of truth—make the best public advantage important to them individually—give them in short, their true direct and indirect influence in the state, and the Commonwealth is safe. A distinguished foreigner, who lately travelled in this country with the commission of an emperor, went into the House of Representatives of this State in the late session, and afterwards expressed his surprise and pleasure at the appearance of the assembly, particularly the age of the members; together with their manner of conducting the public business. At Worcester, any one acquainted with the country, would not have been surprised at the appearance of the assembly, though no one could have been present and been insensible to the vast benefits of free institutions to a people, and with what good prospects the philanthropist may here pursue his labors.

In this city, there was perhaps never a time since the beginning of this reform, which promised so well for the cause. We see young men of all occupations, pressing into its ranks, and urging it forward under a pressure of personal, and more general motive, which to a good mind is irresistible. Here it

is the cause looks for, and finds strength. Over these, interest has not exerted its paralyzing power—habit has not fastened its iron chain—evil example has not had its baneful influence. These are men just coming into life, to act for themselves, and to determine what and whom they will venerate and sustain. They will bring and keep city and country right in the exercise of their admitted and just privileges. Unfettered by a narrow selfishness, the young men of a free state who are honest to their convictions and their responsibilities, have in their moral agency in the community, something of the chivalry of an earlier patriotism, and this is sure to be felt. Let, then, the young men of the land continue to give their zeal and their strength to this worthy cause, and it must prevail.

WALTER CHANNING, *Secretary.*

Boston, May 31, 1839.

(Feb., 1891, 20,000)

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